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> *"If one does any thing wrong in the state of ignorance, one might be free from accountability. But after knowledge one's wrong deeds would be considered a revolt against the truth".*

Maulana Syed Salman Hussaini Nadwi

Maulana Ghulam Mohammad Wastanwi

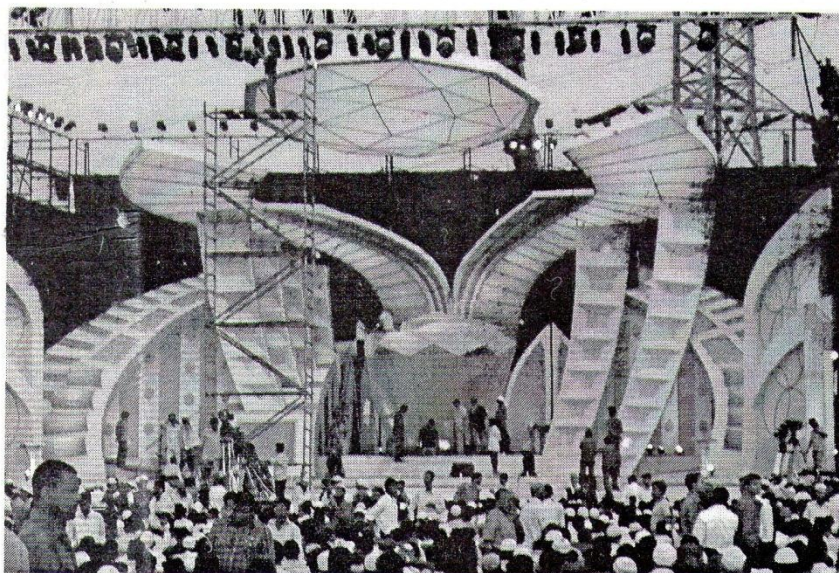
ZAKIR NAIK A Crisis in the Making

By Muddassir Ahmad Qasmi

Constructive steps are always welcomed and admired unreservedly not only by the intellectuals but also by the common men and women. But when in the name of constructiveness, destructive notions are presented, it muddies the waters. Deviations from the truth cannot remain hidden for a long time. And when they are disclosed, they become a curse for those people who purveyed them as constructive.

Nowadays trickery is widespread in day to day affairs, such as in business, politics and in other spheres of life. It is also known that a group of people, spellbound in that deception, willingly consider it as a stratagem to gain vested worldly gains. But it is also a fact in the whole of human history that a large number of people were not deceived in the name of religion for a long time. Though there have been many fake reformers who trapped many innocent people in their net but they were always given a good retort by the people who favour the truth. Automatically their sand castles fell down and they were buried in its debris.

The central point of this piece of writing is to unmask a reality which is ignored not only by ordinary people but also by a group of respected religious scholars (ulama). We may name it 'Zakir Naik: A crisis in the making'.

Dr. Zakir Naik stands in the category of those people who made their own commentary of the many verses of the glorious Qur'an. Is it just a wrong commentary to satisfy his audience? He has done it repeatedly. For instances when he was asked, if a man is given houris in paradise, what would be given to a woman. He replied women would be given male houris. It is not merely a mistake but rather it is a blunder. It is proved by the context of the verse in which this matter is mentioned that houris would only be female. Moreover in the entire collection of hadith there is not even a single shred of evidence in support of his

A view of International Peace Conference

comment.

What would you do with those traditions of the Prophet (saws) in which there are glad tidings for women that they would be in paradise in the company of their husbands?

Every learned man can read and understand the commentary of the glorious Qur'an but to do a personal commentary is another matter altogether. Seventeen (17) kinds of religious sciences are necessary to be acquired to be a commentator. How many sciences out of seventeen has Dr. Zakir Naik learnt?

It is an undeniable fact that the most beneficial book for Muslim women to know the basics of religion and household work in Indian subcontinent is none other than "Behishti Zewar", written by one of the most respected and world famous Deobandi scholar Maulana Ashraf Ali Thanwi, popularly known as Hakimul Ummat. He has to his credit a thousand published books, available all across the world. Every unbiased person may realize this fact.

Behishti Zewar is a book which contains necessary know-how for women from birth to death. It has also been the tradition in the subcontinent that people give this book with the glorious Qur'an as dowry to their daughters. Dr. Zakir Naik and his allies' dismiss this book as 'too dirty to mention'.

Tablighi Jama'at is the most peaceful movement of the world. It has made a sea change by its act of reformation in Muslim ummah throughout the world. The people in the Tablighi Jama'at, during their daily course of study, regularly read a book, namely "Fazail-e A'mal", compiled by Shaikhul Hadith Maulana Muhammad Zakariya (rah). This book consists of various Qur'anic verses and ahadith with their explanations. Dr. Zakir Naik and company are completely against this book. They say the theme of the book is based on wrong hypothesis or very weak ahadith.

The question is whether, in religious matters, Shaikhul Hadith Maulana Mohammad Zakariya (rah) is more learned or self-styled Dr. Zakir Naik? Shaikhul Hadith was a person whom both Arabs and non-Arabs regarded as an authoritative scholar of hadith. And where Dr. Zakir Naik does stand is known to all as he cannot pronounce even a few Qur'anic verses correctly.

Visiting a graveyard or mausoleum or even praying for dead persons (isaal-e-sawab), tasawwuf etc. are innovations and unIslamic according to the school Zakir Naik belongs too. If one is a murid of a pir (disciple of a spiritual teacher), according to 'Zakiri school' it is as though he has nearly committed a grave sin like that of shirk (associating partners with Allah)!

There are other so many issues where Dr Zakir Naik and all mainstream ulama stand on opposite sides. We do not wish to and cannot critique them all in these limited pages of a magazine. Leave aside Deobandi ulama; Dr. Zakir Naik also made Barelvi and the Shia groups angry by his amateurish remarks

An Arab alim Abu Abdur Rahman Yahya expressed his disagreement with Dr Naik's veiws in his book "Zakir Al-HIndi..."

A sizeable number of the ulama oppose Dr. Zakir Naik and company because instead of preaching Islam they target particular religious groups, according to their bent, for the sake of propagating their own vested ideology. They do not want madrasas to get zakat money from Muslims. On the contrary, they use zakat funds to run their own English medium school, which collects monthly fee in thousands from children who are mostly from well-off families. How does he justify doing so?

This year too a dozen odd ulama with a few big names were invited to Dr. Zakir Naik's international peace conference in Mumbai from 22nd – 31st October 2010. Some happily accepted it as usual – as if they got heaven-sent chance, and some made excuses for their attendance – "we would use his stage and reach to a far and big

An expert on comparative religion and preacher Maulana Sajjad Naomani termed Dr. Zakir Naik as 'khudrow ghas' that is a kind of unwanted grass which grows in the fields during the rainy season and later automatically vanishes during farming period.

audience"-- which shows them up as the real opportunists they are; and the other group rejected the blandishments of the Zakir show and preferred not to attend it.

To show support to a controversial person is to support the controversy itself, which is against the spirit of Islam. Pious ulama are expected to walk on mustahab tracks (special ways of life desired by Islam) rather than following the mubahat (allowed) ones, which are just common tracks. Most of the prominent ulama who have national or international fan following have so far kept themselves away from Dr Zakir's stage, but one does not know about their future course of action.

It is undoubtedly one's personal freedom to decide what to do and what not to do, where to go and where not to go and what to talk and what not to say. But when one is a public figure, his personal likes and dislikes influence others. Most icons do understand their dual responsibility – as a person and as public entity.

Dr Zakir Naik has tried his best to bring in his fold a number of ulama with major fan followings. Till date those who kept their distance from Dr Naik and preferred to stay away from the limelight are:

Maulana Syed Rabe Hasan Nadwi, president All India Muslim Personal Law Board and rector Darul Uloom Nadwatul Ulama Lucknow, Maulana Mohammad Salim Qasmi, vice president All India Muslim Personal Law Board and rector Darul Uloom Waqf Deoband, Maulana Syed Mahmood Madni, MP and leader of Jamiat Ulama-e Hind, Maulana Badruddin Ajmal, MP and member shura (executive body) of Darul Uloom Deoband, Maulana Khalid Saifullah Rahmani, general secretary, All India Fiqh Academy and rector Al-Mah'dul Ali Hyderabad as well as Maulana Kalim Siddiqui, Maulana Sajjad Naomani and Maulana Abdul Aleem Farooqui, to name a few.

Those who so far succumbed to Dr Zakir's corporate preaching and hi-fi life style, risking their own reputation and public responsibility, are:

Maulana Ghulam Mohammad Wastanwi, member shura (executive body) of Darul Uloom Deoband and rector Jamia Isha'tul Uloom, Akkalkuwa, Maulana Syed Salman Hussaini Nadwi, professor at Darul Uloom Nadwatul Ulama, Lucknow and a few others with local or limited popularity. They have actually compromised with their own religious ideology and let down the spirit of the reputed institutions they are attached with. Both the world famous Islamic learning centres of India – Darul Uloom Deoband and Nadwatul Ulama Lucknow do not endorse all that Dr Zakir Naik preaches or believes in. How these ulama found excuses to be a part of Dr. Zakir's popularity stunt is a

Dr. Zakir Abdul Karim Naik

Zakir Naik is a medical professional; brought up in Mumbai's corporate world and he learnt well how to fetch business through religious preaching. Baba Ramdev is popular among Hindus, using his media management skill to popularize yoga for the masses. Similarly, Dr Zakir Abdul Karim Naik is popular among a section of Muslims, thanks to his corporate management skill, for his learnt-by-heart English speeches.

A section of Muslims feel Dr Naik is heading towards making a new sect among Muslims. He is gradually growing to be an issue for Muslim Indians. An expert on comparative religion and preacher Maulana Sajjad Naomani termed Dr. Zakir Naik as 'khudrow ghas' that is a kind of unwanted grass which grows in the fields during the rainy season and later automatically vanishes during farming period.

"I think the time has arrived to genuinely check Dr Naik's speeches vis-à-vis ijmah of the ummah, otherwise Dr Naik may create a new crisis for the entire Muslim ummah" said Maulana Mahmood Ahmad Khan Daryabadi, general secretary of All India Ulama Council.

Maulana Muhmmad Salim Qasmi

mystery among their followers.

Anjuman-e Ahlus Sannat Wal Jama'at, a body of Deobandi and Nadwi alumni in Mumbai which counts among its objectives to work for and safeguard the internal purity of Islam, with thousand plus members mostly madrasa teachers, imams of masjids or self-employed ulama in Mumbai, have repeatedly appealed to a few of invited ulama not to participate in the Zakir Naik's international peace conference. The Anjuman and its officials, reportedly, put reasons for their appeal in black and white before them and they personally talked to some of them about their stand on Zakir Naik and his controversial status among Muslims.

However, a few ulama such as mentioned above overlooked the appeal and decided to be a part of 'Naik's light and show' programme. If one does any thing wrong in the state of ignorance, one might be free from accountability. But after knowledge one's wrong deeds would be considered a revolt against the truth.

Maulana Wastanwi has name and fame and a wide body of work to his credit, but then what brought him to the glittering world of Dr. Zakir Naik? Darul Uloom Deoband has issued an advisory against Zakir Naik's explanation of Islam and restricted people from participation in his programmes at its online fatwa web site. It is a question in the minds of thousands of Darul Uloom alumni and well wishers how a shura member could go against Deoband's advisory! Should he remain in the Darul Uloom's body after this misstep, an answer many are looking for?

"I think the time has arrived to genuinely check Dr Naik's speeches vis-à-vis ijmah of the ummah" said Maulana Mahmood Ahmad Khan Daryabadi,

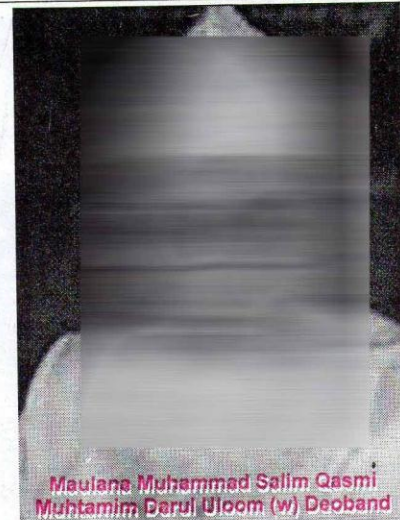
How a Maulana Rejects Zakir Naik's Glamour World?

The famous Indian scholar Maulana Mohammad Salim Qasmi, vice president of All India Muslim Personal Law Board and the Muhtamim (VC) of Darul Uloom Deoband (waqf) was invited to International Peace Conference of Dr. Zakir Naik in Mumbai for the second time this year. There was an appeal from Deoband alumni for Maulana not to participate in the programme following controversies swirling around Dr. Naik. But Maulana Qasmi came to Mumbai and talked to a number of ulama in Fine Touch Masjid of Central Mumbai in his effort to persuade them in favour of his participation in the Conference. Here is an extract by one of the participants of the discussion.

By M. Tauqeer Qasmi

When I entered Fine Touch building, Maulana Salim Qasmi Saheb was asking the ulama present (around 100) the reasons why they did not want him to participate in Dr Zakir Naik's programme.

Mufti Saeedur Rahman Qasmi of Darul Uloom Imdadia Madrasa at Mohammad Ali Road, Mumbai gave him a booklet – 'Dr Zakir Naik - Ek Mut'ala' (Dr Zakir Naik - A Study) compiled by Mufti Obaidullah As'adi, Shaikhul Hadith of Jamia Arabia, Hatura, UP which gives details about issues that are controversial among Dr. Naik and general Muslims. He also presented before him a lengthy (496 page) book –'Haqeeqat-e Zakir Naik' (The True Colour of Zakir Naik) written by a Pakistani author, Maulana Syed Khaleeq Sajid Bukhari, and published from Maktaba Madina, Deoband, in April 2010.

Maulana Mohammad Salim Qasmi opening his heart to the audience, said 'you are from me and I am from you. We have a close relation with Darul Uloom Deoband. He

Maulana Muhammad Salim Qasmi
Muhtamim Darul Uloom (w) Deoband

A book wirten by an Arab Aalim, Abu Abdur Rahman Yahya Bin Ali Al-Hujuri

further said that ulama have been addressing the needs of the ummah. Even if a Muslim holds the feast of "aqiqah", he has at least one Maulana on his guest list. That shows the love and regard of the Muslims for the ulama.

Maulana Qasmi explained to his selected audience who were mostly Deoband and Nadwa alumni that the akabir (elders) of Deoband had three major characteristics, among others:

1. They made all-out efforts to preach Islam.

2. They never hesitated to share the dais even with those Muslim sects who called them kafir.

3. They never gave the dismissive tag of kafir to any Muwahhid (one who believes in monotheism) even though the others had termed them as kafir.

Maulana Salim Qasmi shared his experience saying that once he was called to a conference held by presently banned Students Islamic Movement of India (SIMI). Despite ideological differences between SIMI and Deoband, when they listened to him, they were not only impressed but many of them realized their own mistakes. "Our point of view is so strong and factual that no one can oppose it by mere argument. Every one has to admit the strong basis of our religious stance" he said.

Maulana further explained that the differences in Muslim sects are primarily because of excess of knowledge. That is the reason that Muslims have a large number of sects. There are not so many sects in Christianity, Hinduism, Judaism etc, because they generally do not study their own scriptures.

He emphasized a lot on the point that if somebody believes in the basics of Islam that is in the five pillars of Islam and Eiman-e Mufassal, one should try to ignore other differences. Such kind of Muslim is not ZALL (One who makes people astray) or MUZILL (who is astray) he is just a KHATEE (wrong doer). There is no problem to share the stage with such kinds of people.

'Haqeeqat-e Zakir Naik' (The True Colour of Zakir Naik) by a Pakistani author, Maulana Syed Khaleeq Sajid Bukhari and published from Maktaba Madina Deoband in April 2010.

On being asked about Dr. Zakir's wrong explanation of the Qur'an, Maulana Salim Qasmi responded saying: If some people do taweel (uncommon explanation) with good intentions in the Qur'an, it should be accepted but tahreef (wrong explanation) of the Qur'an is totally unacceptable.

Than I got my chance to speak and I addressed Maulana Salim Qasmi Saheb: "Hazrat we see you as one of the great scholars of Islam, son of Hazrat Hakimul Islam Maulana Qari Tayyab (rah), an ideologue of famous Darul Uloom Deoband and we do respect your views. But Dr. Zakir Naik attempts to deny ijma and qayas and this is against the spirit of Shari'ah.

It is a fact that by virtue of his Peace TV there is a craze for Zakir Naik among some youngsters and ultra modern Muslims not only in Mumbai but in some other parts of the world too. Some consider him a scholar of Islam.

Zakir Naik repeats that he believes only in Qura'an and Sahih Hadith. All Muslims from Ahle Sunnah Wal Jama'h believe and consider the Qura'an, Sunnah, Ijma and Qayas as sources of Islamic Shar'iah." I informed the Maulana that Dr Naik hides his ideological identity and misleads common youth by not conforming to these traditional sources of the Sharia'h.

Many people come to us enquiring about Zakir Naik, and when we reply that we neither appreciate nor endorse his style of preaching, some argue that a few ulama, even from Deoband, support him, share the stage with him which show their agreement with Dr. Naik!"

Maulana Qasmi responded to my last point and said: 'I do not agree with the point that sharing the stage with somebody means an agreement. I would rather go there and put forward my point of view'.

Mufti. Saeedur Rahman asked 'Maulana you would be given a specific topic and have to speak accordingly. How would you be able to put across your point of view?'

Maulana Qasmi replied that he was not bound by any particular topic. "I can put across my point of view," he said.

باسمہ سبحانہ

ڈاکٹر ذاکر نائک

ایک مطالعہ

از: (مولانا ومفتی) محمد عبیداللہ صاحب الاسعدی

استاذ حدیث وفقہ جامعہ عربیہ ہتھورا باندہ (یوپی)

'Dr Zakir Naik – Ek Mut'ala' (Dr Zakir Naik – A Study) compiled by Mufti Obaidullah As'adi, Shaikhul Hadith of Jamia Arabia, Hatura, UP

The Maulana was enlightened by a member that he may put forth his point of view but it could reach only to the audience he was directly interacting with on that day and place. As far as the TV viewer-ship was concerned, his point of view would reach to them only after it is 'suitably' edited and 'ideologically' scanned.

It was also pointed out to Maulana Salim Qasmi that the Islamic Research Foundation (IRF) of Dr. Zakir Naik was not at all interested in putting the Maulana's message across through their TV channel but they were interested in putting his face on TV as attending an IRF programme with the tag of 'Muhtamim Darul Uloom Waqf Deoband' alongside.

The host of the discussion, Rafique Dudhwala asserted that, "I have seen people there scanning every part of a speech that goes against their beliefs". Mufti Azizur Raman Fatehpuri, the grand Mufti of Maharashtra, added that Dr. Asrar Ahmad of Pakistan was delivering a speech at IRF programe in Mumbai's YMCA ground just a few years ago, and a questioner asked whether taqleed (following) of any of four imams is shirk or not. Dr. Asrar answered it was not only allowed but it was an obligation for every common individual to follow any of the four imams – Shafi, Malik, Ahmad bin Hambal or Abu Hanifa. But later that answer was omitted from the CD.

Zakir Naik does everything that may catch public attention, I informed the Maulana. At a programme in Mumbai's Hajj House, where I was also present, his father Dr Abdul Karim Naik announced that his son – Zakir Naik has discovered a method that enables everyone who wants to become a hafiz or memorize the whole Qur'an, to do so with in just three months' time. He also blamed madrasas in the same breath that they together could not do such 'an easy work' in hundred years and asked the audience about the usefulness of present madrasas in India.

IRF had also published the same idea in major Mumbai-based Urdu newspapers and explained that through an Arabian scientist they found a 'method' through which students can memorize the whole Qur'an within three months. To get to the truth of this extraordinary finding and get supplementary details, Eastern Crescent sent two of its trainee journalists to IRF.

After enquiry, they found the entire claim was a hoax. The actual 'discovered method' of memorizing the whole Qur'an in 90 days was that a teacher recites a verse of the Qur'an and the student follows. This they do with the whole of the Qur'an and thus the student 'memorizes' the whole Qur'an within three months but the student cannot read out even some verses of the Qur'an without looking at it. After this three months' training, the

Muft Azizur Rahman Fatehpuri grand Mufti of Maharashtra

student requires three more years to 'perfect' his memorization.

Is there anything extraordinary in this method? Madrasas generally produce "huffaz", memorisers of the Qur'an, in 2-3 years. Some extraordinary students perfect it in a year and in very special cases in less then a year. Eastern Crescent carried an article about this 'new method' in one if its 2008 issues.

A member of the discussion argued that Dr Zakir Naik has been doing exactly the same that the Christians and Jews are failed to do in India, that is alienating common Muslims from madrasas and ulama. He and his men discourage people from visiting ulama for knowledge and sending children to madrasas.

On this Maulana Salim Qasmi said, 'he has debated successfully with the Christians and preached Islam far and wide'.

It stunned every one for a while. An uneasy gossip started all around. Than one person remarked: "We cannot ignore his negative side altogether". He might be doing some good work which we do not deny, he said. But his thrust on Dawah work is now becoming part of his past, and he has now become more of a glamorous person, looking for petro-dollars to finance his mega events in India, he added.

Before he was caught in controversies, some of our ulama from Mumbai not only appreciated him but also supported him in his work. But later through critical observation it was found that IRF is working to promote its undeclared mission to force people to convert to "ghair muqallidiat", i.e. those who do not follow any school of theology.

Mufti Azizur Rahman cited the example of one Shehzad Malik, formerly working with IRF, who was forced to put hands on chest instead of navel, which all Hanafi Muslims do, during salah.

A friend from Safa School observed that the reality behind calling big names and ulama like Maulana Salim Qasmi is that complaints have been made to the Awqaf ministry of Saudi Arabia that Zakir Naik is misusing their money and no authentic alim of India supports him. So Dr Naik is looking to bring renowned ulama to his fold to market his position around the world.

Maulana Salim Qasmi was also informed that the expenditure of zakat money mentioned by Zakir Naik includes his programme advertisements, TV channel cost and the expenses of the speakers in his conferences. Mufti Azizur Rahman added "you might also be paid for five star hotel stay, air tickets and even 'hadiya' (gift) from the zakat money".

On this Maulana Mohammad Salim Qasmi said, "I already have said in the very beginning you are from me and I am from you. If you do not agree on my participation, than how can I go?"

This is how one more Maulana rejected Dr Zakir Naik's overtures, where the strobe lights of the show try to dispel the darkness but just for only ten days of the year.

12.11.2008

[illegible]

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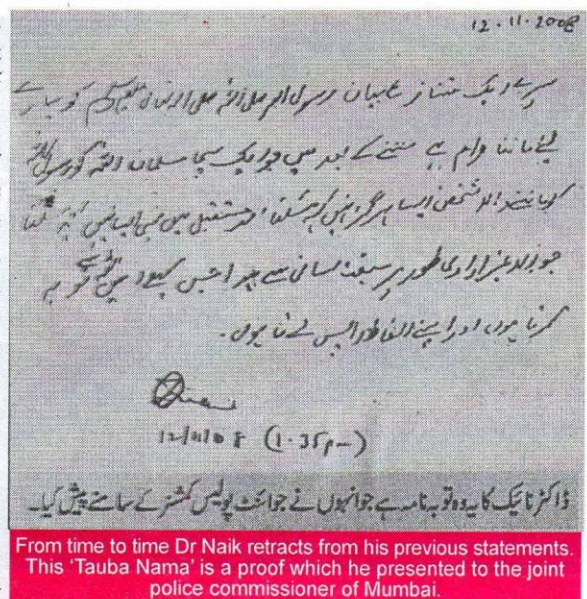
جو الفاظ غیر ارادی طور پر سبقت لسانی سے ادا ہوئے ان کے لیے میں توبہ

کرتا ہوں اور اپنے الفاظ واپس لیتا ہوں۔

12/11/08 (1.35 pm)

ڈاکٹر نائیک کا یہ وہ توبہ نامہ ہے جو انہوں نے جوائنٹ پولیس کمشنر کے سامنے پیش کیا۔

From time to time Dr Naik retracts from his previous statements. This 'Tauba Nama' is a proof which he presented to the joint police commissioner of Mumbai.